


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2005

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORTS FROM THE HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION, 1998 - 2005

---

**ISSUE:** Receipt of the annual reports (1998-2004 and 2004-2005) from the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council receive the reports of the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission and thank the Commission for their efforts on behalf of the City.

**DISCUSSION:** The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission has prepared two reports detailing the activities of the Commission from July 1998 through June 2004 (Attachment I), and July 2004 through June 2005 (Attachment II). During this period, the Commission held 70 regularly scheduled meetings to discuss issues relating to the City's historic sites, resources, and preservation as well as local history, tourism, and projects within the three planning districts.

1. Old and Historic District. In January 1999 the Commission advised Council that the City should update the nomination of the Old and Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places since more information has been discovered since the nomination was originally submitted 30 years ago. This is still under review by staff.
2. Open Space. The Commission recommended preserving open space and that history and historic resources be integrated with open space, trees and the environment. Members attended meetings of the Open Space Planning Task Force and wrote a letter in April 2003 to the Department of Parks and Recreation that recommended enhancements of the Strategic Master Plan for Open Space.
3. Washington Street Task Force. In March/April 1999 the Commission endorsed the creation of the Washington Street Task Force and recommended that Council observe the provisions of the 1929 agreement between the City and Federal Government regarding development along the Washington Street corridor.

4. Jones Point Park. The Commission recommended to Council that additional mitigation on Jones Point Park be required and to approve the historic resource plan, reduce the size of the deck, and acquire the Freedmen's Cemetery property.
5. One-hundred-year-old Buildings Survey. An update of the survey would significantly aid preservation efforts in the City and the Commission recommended using the proceeds from a fine imposed on a Queen Street residence owner to partially defray the cost of the survey.
6. Historic Properties Fund. In May 2000 the Commission endorsed the creation of a fund to aid non-City-owned properties with emergency and maintenance needs. In November 2003 the Lee-Fendall House was the recipient of a City grant to help restore its structural integrity and the Commission also recommended to Council that \$50,000 be budgeted for preservation, restoration, and maintenance projects.
7. Historic Alexandria Long-Range Plan. The Commission was one of many groups that contributed to the endeavor to identify long-range capital improvement needs for both City and privately-owned historic sites.
8. Alexandria Heritage Trail. The Commission recommended that Council approve the nomination of the Alexandria Heritage Trail as an official segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.
9. City Strategic Plan. In June 2004 the Commission made recommendations to Council that added historic resources goals and objectives to the 5-year plan.
10. Alexandria Black History Museum. The Commission supported the name change from the original Black Historic Resource Center to better represent its mission in the community.
11. Historic Sites Reports. The Commission varied the locations of its meetings in order to give members an opportunity to visit different historic sites and to provide reports on events and issues relating to each site.
12. 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of America Celebration (Jamestown 2007 Celebration). The Commission became the sponsor of this event and will be coordinating community events to increase interest and tourism in Alexandria. Planning for the events will involve a variety of local organizations and includes antique shows, special tours, lectures, and an exhibit at The Lyceum.
13. Preserve America. The Commission endorsed the City's application for this prestigious certification that the City of Alexandria achieved in 2004.

14. Accreditations of City-Owned Historic Sites. The Commission participated in the successful accreditation process (by the American Association of Museums) for 3 City-owned historic sites: Gadsby's Tavern Museum, The Lyceum, and Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site.
15. Board of Architectural Review. The Commission made recommendations concerning Elliott House (Old Presbyterian Meeting House) and development of the 800 block of South Columbus Street (Shiloh Baptist Church/Harambee project) to the Board of Architectural Review.
16. 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commission. Several HARC members worked on the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commission and were instrumental in planning events that took place 1998-2000.
17. Windmill Hill Park. The Commission supported the Windmill Hill Park plan in a letter dated May 2002.
18. Freedmen's Cemetery. The Commission advised the Planning Commission on Freedmen's Cemetery following a meeting and sent a follow-up letter in September 2003. Also, archaeological work on the site was completed in 2004-2005 in anticipation of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, Virginia.
19. The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum. The Commission supported the acquisition of The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum by the City of Alexandria.
20. Preservation Activities. The Commission participated in preservation activities that included the recognition of the Alexandria Archaeology Program by the Virginia Preservation Alliance, the preservation of the Gunston Hall Apartment Complex, the Lloyd House garden re-development, the Hunting Creek Small Area Plan, Potomac Yard, and Four Mile Run restoration.
21. Historic Site Maintenance Needs Video and Funding. Members commissioned a short video on funding for severe deterioration problems at several historic sites. The video was shown at a City Council public hearing in October 2005. The Commission also planned a conference for fall 2005 on the budgetary needs of both the Office of Historic Alexandria and private, non-profit organizations.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1. Historic Alexandria Resources Commission Annual Report 1998-2004

Attachment 2. Historic Alexandria Resources Commission Annual Report 2004-2005

**STAFF:**

Jean Taylor Federico, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria

Jackie Cohan, City Archivist and Records Manager

# HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION

## ANNUAL REPORT

September 1998 – June 2004

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC) submits the following report regarding the activities of the Commission from September 1998 through June 2004. The Commission meets once a month from September through June, ten months a year. It is with apology that this report is submitted for this lengthy period of time. It is the intention of the Commission to complete yearly reports in the future.

HARC is comprised of 26 members representing commissions and societies with an interest in history, historic sites located in the City of Alexandria open to the public, planning districts, businesses, and volunteers. This membership was increased in September 2000 following the sale of the Lee Boyhood Home, and was one of the recommendations made to City Council during this period. The mandate of the Commission is to advise the City in the preservation of historic sites and buildings, artifacts, and records and to promote citizen and tourist use of historic sites and the Torpedo Factory Art Center. An additional function of the Commission is to enhance communication within the historic community.

The activities during this period can be divided into three general categories. First, recommendations were made to City Council on a variety of subjects affecting historic resources in the City. Second, support and advice was offered to the Office of Historic Alexandria and privately-owned sites. And, third, members of HARC participated in other City boards and task forces. The most significant of these activities will be noted below.

### **1. Recommendations made to City Council.**

- HARC members advised (January 1999) that the City should update the nomination of the Old and Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. Members noted that more than 30 years have passed since the nomination was completed and submitted. Since that time, more has been discovered about the resources within the Historic District. In addition, the members noted that attention to historic resources should be part of a holistic approach to the environment of the City, integrating history with open space, trees and cityscape.
- In March and April of 1999, HARC endorsed the creation of the Washington Street Task Force. HARC also recommended that the Council endorse the concept of preserving open spaces and adhering to the provisions of the 1929 agreement between Alexandria and the Federal Government regarding development along the Washington Street corridor.
- Significant attention was paid to the plans for Jones Point Park. The historic significance of the site was noted consistently in discussions on the subject. The following recommendations were made: that additional mitigation be required; that the historic resource plan be approved; that the deck be reduced in size; and that Freedmen's Cemetery property be acquired.

- HARC suggested to City Council that a preservation fine imposed on a Queen Street residence owner be used to update the 100-year-old buildings survey. This survey has been viewed by HARC as an important goal to be achieved, as it would aid significantly in preservation efforts within the city.
- Several letters were written to City Council during the period outlined to advocate for money and assistance for the maintenance and preservation of the historic structures and sites. In May of 2000, HARC endorsed the creation of a Historic Properties Fund to aid non-city owned properties with emergency and maintenance needs. HARC supported a grant from the City to the Lee-Fendall House in November of 2003. And, in that same month, HARC recommended to City Council that \$50,000 be budgeted for preservation, restoration, and maintenance projects. Most importantly, in February 2001, the Historic Alexandria Long-Range Plan was sent to City Council. The plan identified long-range capital improvement needs relating to the City's historic resources and made recommendations about support for private sites. While this was an effort of many groups, HARC members contributed significantly to this important committee.
- The members of HARC recommended that City Council approve the nomination of the Alexandria Heritage Trail for designation as an official segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. The trail is a walking and biking loop that covers 23 miles of the City of Alexandria.
- In June of 2004, HARC made recommendations to Council regarding the City Strategic Plan. These suggestions added goals and objectives to the 5-year plan related to our historic resources and fabric.

## **2. Support and advice provided to the Office of Historic Alexandria and to historic sites within the City.**

- The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission varies the location of its meetings so that members have an opportunity to visit, as a Commission, the historic sites. During the period of the report, HARC met at The Lyceum, Lloyd House, Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site, the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, Lee-Fendall House, the Black History Museum, and Barrett Branch Library.
- Reports from members are provided at each meeting. This affords the Commission an opportunity to share information on events and issues relating to the sites. We are well aware of the importance of linking the private and public sites and working together to preserve the history of our City.
- HARC provided advice to the Office of Historic Alexandria on the Historic Alexandria Long-Range Plan. This was a comprehensive document written by staff and volunteers and remains an important resource in outlining the challenges facing our historic sites as well as recommendations to address these challenges.
- The members of HARC supported the Alexandria Black History Museum in changing the name of the site to better represent its mission in our community.

- The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission is the sponsor of the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of America celebration in the City (formally known as Jamestown 2007 Celebration). In this capacity, HARC will be coordinating the community events that will celebrate this important anniversary, not only providing education and interest in our history, but also increasing tourist visitation to our City.
- HARC endorsed the City's application for the *Preserve America* Community program in January 2004. This is a prestigious award that reflects our dedication to the preservation of our historic city.
- Members of HARC assisted in reviewing and participating in accreditations of our historic sites. We are honored to have in the City three sites that have been accredited by the American Association of Museums: Gadsby's Tavern Museum, The Lyceum, and Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site.

### **3. Participation with other City Boards, Task Forces, and the like.**

- HARC provided recommendations to the Board of Architectural Review concerning Elliott House (Old Presbyterian Meeting House).
- Several members of HARC worked on the Alexandria 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commission and were instrumental in planning the events that occurred in 1998-2000, collaborating and coordinating with other groups within the City, and working to ensure the success of the celebration.
- A member of HARC participated in the Windmill Hill Park planning group. HARC supported the plan in a letter dated May 2002.
- Members attended meetings of the Open Space Planning Task Force and reported on the relevant issues and results of the Task Force. HARC wrote a letter in April 2003 to the Department of Parks and Recreation highlighting the portions of the report that supported the historic fabric of the City and making recommendations to further enhance the Strategic Master Plan for Open Space.
- HARC monitors issues coming before the Board of Architectural Review. A letter was written to this Board regarding the development of the 800 block of South Columbus Street in May 2003.
- HARC advised the Planning Commission on Freedmen's Cemetery following a presentation and lengthy discussion. A letter was sent to the Planning Commission from HARC in September 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Ellen Stanton  
Chair

# HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA RESOURCES COMMISSION

## ANNUAL REPORT

2004 – 2005

The Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC) submits this report detailing the activities of the Commission from September 2004 through June 2005. During this period, the Commission held ten meetings to discuss those issues that affect the City's ability to support and preserve Alexandria's historic characteristics and programs.

HARC is made up of members from the community at large, each of the three planning districts, and representatives from organizations whose interest is in local history and historic preservation. At its meetings, the Commission as a group receives reports from its members on the wide variety of activities relating to historic programming in Alexandria. These include presentations from Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) staff, from the representatives of the affiliated organizations, and from the representatives of the planning districts. These reports include information about regular programs and activities, as well as emergencies facing Alexandria's historic community.

In addition, the Commission meets at a variety of sites, including those owned and managed by OHA as well as representative sites managed by other private, non-profit agencies across the city. In the 2004-2005 year, the Commission met at the city's Archaeology Museum, the Black History Museum, the Archives and Records Center, The Lyceum, Lloyd House, and Fort Ward. In addition, it met at the Old Dominion Boat Club, and at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House. At each of the sites, other than Lloyd House, the Commission heard a presentation on the site being visited. This activity reminds us all of the variety of historic resources available to the Alexandria community and its visitors. It also allows us to review particular issues and problems facing the individual sites.

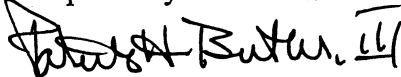
In the 2004-2005 year, beyond the regular reports, the Commission focused on the following special issues of interest to Alexandria's historical community.

Although Alexandria recently completed a celebration of its own 250th Anniversary in 1999, we have been invited, as a local community, to participate in the 2007 Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the founding of Jamestown. Members of the Commission, chaired by Pat Butler, have worked to develop a program that supports this celebration in the community, relating our activities to the State-wide Commemoration and attracting visitors to Alexandria as a part of the celebration. Over the year, we identified several projects as 400th Anniversary projects. The most significant is the completion of the Freedmen's Cemetery historic site. In addition, the city will involve a variety of local organizations in events marking the 400th Anniversary, including antique shows, special tours, lectures, and related activities. The Lyceum will be developing an exhibit focusing on Alexandria celebrations from the late 18th century to the late 20th century. The city's birthday celebration in 2007 will be marked as a special 400th Anniversary event. We continue to work to add other activities appropriate to the year.

At the same time, the Commission focused on the budgetary needs of the Office of Historic Alexandria. During the winter and spring, we worked to develop resources that would identify needs of the Department for both the Council and the community at large. In the end, we commissioned a short video focusing on historic preservation problems facing the different historic properties that would be completed during the summer of 2005. At the same time, working with the Historic Alexandria Foundation, we laid plans for a conference on the budgetary and financial needs of both the Office of Historic Alexandria and private non-profit organizations to be held in the fall of 2005.

We also recognized and supported the acquisition of the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum by the City of Alexandria. Other activities included celebration of the recognition of the Alexandria Archaeology program by the Virginia Preservation Alliance/APVA in January, the preservation of the Gunston Hall Apartment Complex, the Alexandria Association's fund raising event to support the Lloyd House Garden development, and city planning projects including the Hunting Creek small area plan, Potomac Yards, and Four Mile Run restoration. HARC's Chair, Ellen Stanton, addressed City Council on several of these projects, both in person and by letter.

Respectfully submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick H. Butler III". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "P" and a distinct "III" at the end.

Patrick H. Butler III,  
Vice-Chair